

Some Studies In Religion

LOUIS TUCKER



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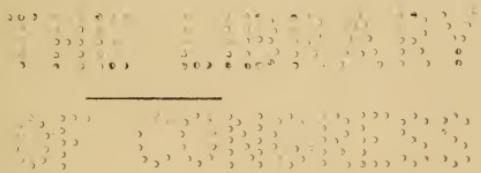
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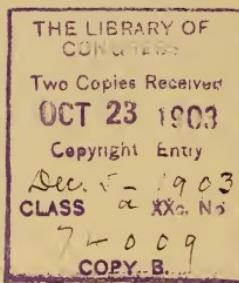
Portions of Christian Evidences Translated
out of the Technical Terms of Theology
into those of Popular Science

BY THE
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CHAPTER I.

ON TECHNICAL LANGUAGE.

PERHAPS the hardest thing in the world is to get men who have been trained in the technical language of one pursuit, which they know thoroughly, to listen to ideas couched in the technical language of another pursuit which they dislike. Thus the anger of a sailor at a legal document and his despair of ever understanding it is only to be matched by the despairing anger of a judge who is expected to understand a series of rapidly-issued orders on shipboard; or the mental position of a soldier who has casually remarked to a farmer on the strategic value of a certain hill is to be compared only to that of the farmer who has failed to convey to the soldier any clear idea of the advantages of the same hill for raising turnips. It is, of

course, trite to point out that law and sailing are both valuable or that turnips and strategy have each their uses.

The truths of the legal document, when stripped of their verbiage and laid before the sailor, interest him as fair and just; while a judge, having gotten a clear idea of the purpose of commands on ship-board, sees that they are what he would order done himself. Thus there seems an inborn sympathy in the normal human mind with truths of all kinds, even the truths of the most specialized and technical pursuits; together with an intense impatience of the pursuits themselves and especially of their technical language. Hence a conversation between a schoolma'am and a horse-jockey as to the real value of training would be likely to show genuine interest, together with much superficial misunderstanding and annoyance.

This mental repugnance to unfamiliar technicalities seems incurable. If the lawyer, to return to that illustration, wish to convey legal ideas to the sailor he must throw

legal phrases to the wind, and put clear-cut technicalities into clumsy common speech. If the sailor explain sailing orders to the lawyer he must make plain in many devious sentences what is hit off in one word of his own lingo; or else the sailor must study law and the lawyer sailing; and both with a certain impatience.

Within the last two centuries, and especially within the latter half of this present one, there has grown up a specialized body of men with a highly technical vocabulary and a sharply-defined mode of thought; a body as remarkable for cultivation along some lines and neglect along others as were the barons of the feudal ages; steel-clad soldiers whose bravery and skill in war were beyond dispute, but whose ideas of letters and the rights of property were confused. This body of men, having specialized and in some sense created a mode of thought and expression, naturally listen with impatience to ideas couched in technical language foreign to their own. For their purposes their own language and mode of thought are best.

Now there grew up about eighteen centuries ago another specialized body of men, whose language and mode of thought have since become highly crystallized and technical. These also are equally remarkable for cultivation along some lines and neglect along others, and they listen with equal impatience to ideas expressed in a method foreign to their own. Thus the scientist feels impatience with the theologian, and the theologian with the scientist. It would probably be trite to point out that the acts, such as the imprisonment of Galileo or the enthronement of the Goddess of Reason in Notre Dame, into which this impatience has hurried the more violent of either side, however blameworthy they may be, do not in any way affect the abstract truth or falsehood of the belief of either party. Nor, indeed, does their much more common and therefore more regrettable abuse of each other.

Yet a country clergyman, although lifting up his hands in holy horror, is really interested in the central truths of science; and

the professor of Biology, though with uplifted hand and averted face he deprecate the hopelessly illogical assumptions of the theologian, is really interested in the central truths of religion. In fact there have not been wanting promptly suppressed spirits who dared refer to the proverb of the two sides of the shield and suggest that the two were identical.

There exists, and has existed for ages, a mass of people, not theologians, whose ideas are cast in the theological mould of thought and expression; and there has sprung up within the last century a class, not scientists, whose ideas are cast in the scientific mould of expression and thought. Each feels interest in the truths of the opposite method, much as a sailor does in the justice and fairness which underlie the jargon of a good law; but each has a truly sailor-like impatience of that opposite method itself. Obviously, to convey the truths, that method should be dropped and as near an approach made to the other as is within the power of

the writer. Such an attempt could not, in common justice, address itself to theologian or professor; any move toward teaching the teachers being at once illogical and assuming. But to those who are not teachers in either camp such an attempt might have the same interest that a poet's criticisms of poetry have to a critic, or a doctor's struggles to express a diagnosis in plain English have to the mourners.

There seems, then, some opening for a work putting some of the trite and well-known truths of religion into scientific language and modes of thought. When it is remembered that science is well-arranged knowledge, and that all truth can be arranged, it is seen that there should be no conflict between the method and the subject. But the mental difficulty of taking alternately two points of view, of translating, so to speak, from one mental mode to another, is not small; while even the best translation is not so good as the original.

The ideal writer of such a work should

plainly be a master of both modes of thought, the theological and the scientific. The worst permissible writer should at least be master of one. There may seem some logical objection in this to the making of such an attempt by one who is master of neither; but when it is considered that the work involves the incurring of the strongest rebukes from those of both sides who love manner more than matter, and that its success is doubtful, it is evident that the less reputation such a writer has to lose the better; since his insignificance is no bar to the final success of the work if it really answer to a need of the times; while if it do not so answer a need, that same insignificance keeps it from doing harm and shelters the writer; much as in the old days a midshipman was sent home in charge of a naval prize, since he could sail to port or, meeting an enemy's ship, could run away as well as a post-captain; while, if caught, a midshipman more or less was no great matter.

CHAPTER II.

ON THE NATURE OF GOD.

CO ONE who has read the introduction—prefaces and introductions, by the way, are usually left unread, for which reason they have been here printed as chapter one of the text—there has probably seemed a vague charm in the idea of the transference of theological facts into scientific language, but a very plain incoherence as to what facts are to be transferred and how to do it; a problem not unlike that of an African collector who wishes to transfer a choice selection of wild animals from the equatorial forests to his cages, but has not caught the animals. The difficulty of the transference of the facts is increased by a modern habit of religious

teachers which may be illustrated as follows:

Let us imagine a young clergyman saying to himself: "The doctrine of sacraments is logically bound up with that of miracles and of the resurrection of the body; but if I tell my people so, those who do not believe in miracles and doubt the Resurrection of the body will not come to Communion; which is certainly a bad thing. Therefore, I had best keep quiet about the logical connection, and trust that their faith will be strengthened by repeated communions so that they can see it for themselves." The motive is good, but when anyone attempts to give a logical theory of sacraments to such people, he is in the position of a professor who tries to explain the nebular hypothesis to a class of students who are incredulous concerning the theory of gravitation.

This partial teaching is one of the reasons of the dislike for dogma. For the last fifty years it has seemed only necessary to brand a thing as a dogma in order to have most

Christians, and all the rest of the world, regard it as a kind of horror. The origin of dogma would, perhaps, throw some light on the subject. The scientific method may be roughly defined as the collecting of all the known phenomena, and from them inferring an hypothesis; which hypothesis, if it explain all new phenomena discovered, rises to the dignity of a theory; which theory, until disproved, is treated as true. The theological method consists in collecting all known inspired sayings on the subject, and from them inferring a doctrine; which doctrine, if it explain all other inspired sayings afterward shown to bear on the subject, becomes a dogma; which dogma is declared true. Dissenters from either dogma or theory are received by the orthodox with reproofs which, while different in degree, are probably not essentially different in kind. The inspired sayings being limited in number, the construction of dogma practically ceased some fifteen centuries ago; that is, the logical inferences were all drawn and tested. Differ-

ent inferences from the same facts have since been drawn, but it is a question open to investigation as to whether they are logical.

It is plain that the omission of phenomena or of texts invalidates a dogma or a theory. Theology, by the way, assumes the existence of God and the inspiration of certain documents; which assumptions, if unverified, are of course unscientific.

The partial teaching before complained of greatly hampers the work undertaken. For instance, to quote the Fathers as patient investigators to persons who look upon them as radiant saints or as fanatical monks, is of course lost labor. "They may be saints," says the Sunday School superintendent, "or religious maniacs," says the medical student. "But," chime in both, "they are certainly not investigators." It is equally idle to speak of theology as the formulated deductions from practical religion to men who regard religion as theology put into practice; very much as they regard military drill as tactics put into practice, or Edison's experiments as the

science of electricity put into practice; not seeing that the tactics sprang from the drill, and the science of electricity from the experiments. As a matter of fact theology sprang from religion, and religion is the name for the relations between God and man.

Here, then, are four basic principles. If any one of them does not exist there is no possibility of theology. If there is no God or if man does not exist there can be no religion. If nothing is known of the nature of man or of the nature of God, the relations between them, or religion, must be unknown, and theology therefore unknown, also.

Now the existence of man we may regard as proven—(As a matter of fact certain forms of philosophy doubt it). The nature of man can be investigated and submitted to experiment. The existence of God has been exhaustively and recently examined by the scientific method, Matthew Arnold coming to the conclusion that there is “A Power not

ourselves that makes for righteousness," and Herbert Spencer holding that there is an Unknowable, and speaking of it as "The power that manifests itself in the universe and in the consciousness as the Supreme Reality"; and again, "An Infinite and Eternal Energy from which all things proceed . . . the laws of nature being the modes of action of the Unknowable."

It is noteworthy that he denies that this Unknowable is a person, not because its nature is lower but because it is higher than personality; "Personality" being therefore an unworthy term to apply to it.

There is a certain element of humor in such an investigation not unlike that which would be found in an attempt to measure the distance of a fixed star in inches; and a certain Biblical ring about the conclusions which recalls such sayings as, "Righteous art Thou, O Lord" (Jer. xii. 1); "Canst thou by searching find out God?" (Job); "Without Him was not anything made that was made" (Jno. i.). But this, of course, is

mere accident. For our purpose it is enough that it is not unscientific to say that there is an Infinite and Eternal Energy from which all things proceed; which energy appears to "Make for righteousness," whatever that may mean; and of course there must be some relation between man on the one side and this Infinite and Eternal Energy on the other. If anything can be known about this relation the knowledge can be arranged, and when arranged becomes science or theology, whichever you like; the two being in this case two names for the same thing.

So far this work has been plain enough. Theological writers have so often and so justly been accused of assuming unverified premises, and triumphantly building up logical arguments on a false basis and then declaring that their conclusions are true, that the attempt has been made here to assume nothing that may not fairly be called a scientific conclusion. The reason is plain. Suppose a New York policeman to be arguing with a Polish anarchist—if the imagination

can grasp such a case. The policeman assumes that Government has the right to prevent law-breaking and with triumphant logic proves that the anarchist, who has been smashing windows, should be arrested. The logic is unanswerable—provided that Government has such a right. But the anarchist, whose rioting was undertaken to emphasize his belief that Government has *not* such a right, is not only unconvinced, but angered by his arrest. In like manner any argument which assumes a fact denied by science is quite useless when addressed to scientists.

But to return to the fourth of the basic principles mentioned—the nature of the Unknowable. Is it possible to know anything about the Unknowable? It will be taken as a contradiction in terms amounting to sheer impudence to answer “Yes.”

This contradiction, it will be noted, is found in Christianity, which tells us that the nature of God is deep, past all understanding, and that no man can know Him; and in the same breath gives us a whole Bible

full of information about Him, including minute statements of what He will do to us under certain circumstances. The same contradiction is also found in Science, which declares that force is based on the Infinite and Eternal Energy, that the attraction of gravitation, for instance, is utterly unexplained and a mode of action of the Unknowable. We are not sure that it is an attraction, and we do not know what gravitation is; and yet we have concise laws of its nature and astronomies full of minute statements of what it does to us under certain circumstances. Therefore this contradiction, since it is found in science, cannot be really unscientific.

An analogy to this is not impossible. Let us suppose ourselves in a court-room, spectators of a trial in which a lawyer who is a personal friend of ours is speaking. Another lawyer, who is unknown to us, has been jumping up and interrupting his speech in a way we do not understand, but feel sure must be illegal. Our friend sits down, the

other lawyer begins a speech, and, lo, our friend also jumps up and interrupts. We are at once assured of the legality of interruptions. We will suppose, then, that it is not unscientific to hold that something can be known about the Unknowable, and that therefore some form of theology is possible.

CHAPTER III.

ON FAITH.

BEFORE we can make any advance in religion or theology we are told that we must have faith. Why any man with brains can assent to an absurdity like this the man of scientific training cannot see, since it amounts—he says—to saying that before theology can prove anything to us, we must believe the thing it is going to prove; a great saving of labor, but hostile to the scientific method.

The theologian is naturally impatient of scientific criticisms of theology for the reason that they omit faith. Why any man with brains can logically criticise a conclusion when he has left out one of the reasons for it, they fail to see. For example, one of the

conditions of answered prayer is faith. That a man not having faith can complain that prayers are unanswered, seems to him as illogical as that a mathematician, who is examining the proposition that one two and three added together make six, should call it false because one and three do not make six, but four, and he has refused to count the two in.

This clash of opinions is fortunately due to differences in mode of thought and technical expression, and not to the nature of faith. The theological method, as well as the scientific, requires what is sometimes called "Scientific Imagination," — which seems to be a certain logical vividness of mind. Thus the earlier biologists knew perfectly well a mass of biological facts, and could make neither head nor tail of them. Darwin, with the same facts before him, formulated the theory of evolution.

But behind the scientific imagination lies another mental quality—an acceptance of the facts. No scientist has ever verified

every experiment upon which he bases his investigations. Darwin, for instance, never verified by personal observation every anecdote of the actions of wild animals which he uses. The ordinary popular writers on evolution have not personally verified one-tenth of Darwin's own experiments. A certain common-sense acceptance of other men's experiments and statements is not unscientific.

There is a third mental quality presupposed in the scientific method—a desire and love for truth. This may be a mere sentiment which leads a man to read scientific works: or it may be a grand and boundless enthusiasm, such as has made many a man lay down his life for his convictions and has produced martyrs of science who laughed at death as a light thing in comparison with truth; and this too is a mental quality necessary to the success of the scientific method.

Now these three mental qualities have no name in scientific language that includes them all. In religious language there is one word that means all three: and that word is

“Faith.” A mental condition that does not shrink from considering any, even the most seemingly improbable, hypothesis which will explain the facts; that accepts the facts themselves on reputable human evidence verified wherever possible; and that has a real love for truth strong enough to influence the man’s life; such a mental state is necessary to the existence not only of the religious but also of the scientific method; and in the language of the religious method it is called “Faith.”

This subject of “Faith” was at one time a great annoyance to the scientific mind and to that part of popular opinion which that mind moulds, because of a mistake often made by parish priests and other teachers of theological truth. In like manner the term “Unscientific” is a great annoyance to religious people on account of a mistake often made by scientists. An illustration of the mistake is easy.

An old woman entered a train and planted herself and her bundles by a window.

When the conductor took her ticket she asked him to tell her when she got to Decatur. On his return through the car she asked him again. Both times he courteously assured her that he would. On his next trip through the train she asked him if they had not passed the place, and was told that they had not. She repeated the question five minutes later, and was again calmed by the assurance that they had not passed it. With great nervous anxiety she asked it again on his next appearance, and was again calmed as before. She repeated this some six or eight times, the conductor calming her with an authoritative assurance each time.

A gentleman on the next seat, seeing that the time of arrival at a certain station was later than that given in his time-table, asked the conductor if the train was on time and was told that it was. He pointed out the difference between printed and real time of arrival, and was still told, with some show of temper, that the train was on time. He was annoyed at this and later on complained of

it to the superintendent of the road, learning then that the schedule had just been changed, and his time-table was wrong.

The doubt of the old woman was irrational and emotional. It was quieted by authoritative assertion of the opposite. The doubt of the man was rational and sensible. It was not quieted by mere assertion, but required reasons. The conductor failed to discriminate between rational and irrational doubt, and met both with assertion.

Now, in both religious and scientific affairs, irrational and emotional doubt can only be met by assertion. The thing is true and must be believed; and the defying of the irrational doubt and believing in spite of it is an act of scientific perception—or, in religious matters, an act of faith. For instance, in Haggard's novel, *King Solomon's Mines*, an account is given of a party of Englishmen (it is an old but vivid literary device) who staked their lives on the occurrence of an eclipse foretold in a nautical almanac. They had most uncomfortable

doubts as to the accuracy of the mathematical calculations in the almanac, but they stifled those doubts and went on in spite of them. This was an act of scientific judgment—good common-sense belief in the accuracy of mathematics; but in what way does it differ from an act of faith?

Now, scientific men—University professors, for instance—having continually to deal with absurd and windy objections to their discoveries, dub such objections “Unscientific” and answer them, as they should be answered, by showing that the objector knows nothing of the rudiments of science and lacks scientific perception. Occasionally, as might be expected, they make a mistake and answer some sensible and valid objection in the same way instead of answering it by sound reason. In such a case they are wrong; and not infrequently are publicly proved to be wrong. In the same way theologians and clergymen have continually to deal with senseless and irrational doubts and answer them, as they should be answered,

by saying that the doubter does not know his Bible and lacks faith; and they also often make mistakes, and try to answer rational and sensible doubts by assertion, and the statement that the doubter lacks faith. They are naturally often publicly proved wrong in this.

In both cases the mistake is a confusion between emotional and rational doubt; the proper answer for emotional doubt being assertion, and for rational doubt being argument. Thus, when a man in a Bible class objects to miracles that they break the continuity of nature and hence are impossible, the objection is a rational argument from analogy, and is to be met by showing that they do not break the continuity of nature. But when another man objects that they are incredible and therefore impossible, the objection is irrational (*Mill's Logic, Fallacies*, Chap. iii. § 3.), and to be met by assertion. For the fact that we cannot conceive of a thing is no proof of the impossibility of the thing itself: as is shown sadly enough every

day by innocent children who cannot conceive of the world's evil till they suffer from it.

One element of faith is an enthusiastic love for truth. When, upon investigation, truth is found to be inseparably connected with a Person, the enthusiastic love for truth becomes an enthusiastic love for and belief in that Person. It logically follows (the scientific method is the method of logical reasoning) that the sayings of that Person are to be implicitly obeyed and acted upon: which is the Christian position as to faith.

Faith, then, may be defined as a mental condition which shrinks from no hypothesis, however startling, if it logically explain the facts; which receives the facts themselves on reputable human evidence verified wherever possible; and which shows an enthusiastic love for truth. And this mental condition is self-evidently necessary, not only for entering upon the study of religion, but upon that of science.

CHAPTER IV.

A THEORY OF THE NATURE OF GOD.

HERE is a fact which Mr. Herbert Spencer and the prophet Isaiah, working apparently quite independently of each other, have been equally anxious to impress upon their several generations: namely, that what Herbert Spencer calls the Anthropomorphic, what Isaiah calls the Heathen, and what we may for convenience call the Popular idea of God, is in fact false. Mr. Robert Ingersoll did much good in this matter by pointing out the various absurdities, illogical statements, and contradictions which the popular idea of God involves. But it is to be regretted that he allowed many to go away from his lectures with the feeling that all their ideas of God are false, and that there-

fore there is no God : which might not inaptly be compared to a number of farmers who, having heard a sailor talk of the ocean in a way that upset all their ideas about it, drove away from the village store with the conviction that there is no ocean at all, and that the world is all land.

This false popular or anthropomorphic idea of God can be best explained by an illustration. Let us take some great and good man—George Washington, for instance. Let us suppose this man to die and become a spirit ; to be rid of his body, but not to be changed in any other way. Let us suppose this spirit to study the universe until he knows all about everything in it. Since he knows all about everything he will know how to do everything, even how to be present everywhere. He was a just and a merciful man ; let us suppose him to become so just and so merciful a spirit that there is no limit to those qualities. In conclusion, let us overcome the logical difficulties, and suppose that he goes off somewhere and makes a world.

Such a supposed spirit would be the maker of a world and present everywhere. His knowledge, power, justice, and mercy would be infinite. In all other respects he would be a man like ourselves.

This is, roughly speaking, the popular idea of God. It is held directly or by implication by nine-tenths of Christendom. It is taught implicitly or explicitly from almost every pulpit. And it is denounced by Herbert Spencer as anthropomorphic and by the Bible as heathen.

He in whom there is no variableness nor any shadow of turning is not changeable as human beings are, nor is He to be propitiated, offended, or conciliated as human beings are conciliated or offended. He neither rewards nor punishes in the human sense of those terms. He is above and beyond human understanding and human measurement and man's conception. He is unknowable, and the term personality does not apply to Him any more than the term planet applies to the sun, or the term river applies

to the ocean. The sun is not a planet; but is greater than one. The universe is not the solar system; but includes it. The ocean is not a river; though it gathers all rivers into itself. In the same sense the Unknowable is not a person; but is something greater. It is greater than we are along the lines of acting and feeling and thinking.

When a scientist obtains a number of facts about an unknown thing he proceeds to construct an hypothesis as to the nature of the thing which will explain the facts; and he tests that hypothesis by any other facts which present themselves.

It is not impossible that the insolence of an attempt to apply this method to a study of the Unknowable may attract some attention not unlike that attracted by the first astronomical proposals to weigh and measure the sun. Yet it is also not impossible that a logical hypothesis which explains the known facts in regard to the Unknowable has been formulated, even as the sun has been weighed and measured. The facts have been touched

upon. Is there any hypothesis that will explain them?

Let us assume an hypothesis as to the nature of the Unknowable, and test it by the observed facts.

It would be idle to represent the hypothesis here assumed as really deduced by the writer from the facts mentioned. It can be so deduced and the deduction seems to have been foreshadowed, as have many of the other primary truths of theology, by the Indo-Aryan Buddhists and Brahmans. But as a matter of fact the hypothesis seems to have been first advanced by a man named John, who is now known as Saint John; and it is borrowed here since the source of any hypothesis in no way affects its scientific truth or falsehood. The hypothesis itself (stated by St. John as a revealed truth, which is of course an unscientific way of putting it) is this—"God is Love."

Let us provisionally assume, then, that this Thing, this Infinite and Eternal Energy,

which is the source of all power and the basis of all personality and knowledge, is Love.

Of the way that this view of the nature of God transforms the world to a man it would be unscientific to speak, since the scientific method refuses to consider emotions and feelings and requires facts. It is perhaps worth remark that emotions and feelings are important phenomena of existence and that any method which refuses to consider important phenomena of existence is somewhat unscientific. The matter is not without an element of humor on this account, as also on account of the contrast between the logical deductions from St. John's hypothesis and the usual and illogical ones made by men to whom it is first presented: which may be paralleled by the illogical deduction made by a Russian immigrant from that clause in the Constitution of the United States which says that all men are born free and equal—namely, that he may invite himself to dine with the President; and the logical deduction—which puts a guard at the

door that the President may eat his dinner in peace.

Let us, however, test this hypothesis that the Infinite and Eternal Energy is Love.

It would be idle to claim that the tests to follow are in any way conclusive, being as they are too few in number to establish any certainty; but they will serve to point out the line along which other tests are possible. We know something about Love. We do not know what it is, and we often and wilfully confuse it with passion and lust; but every man who has had father or mother or child, knows something of its real nature and how it acts. Thus, if the hypothesis be correct, the nature of the Unknowable is not something outside of human reach, but can be investigated by experiment. It can, if men do not shrink from such treatment of such a thing, be studied by the scientific method.

It may or may not be wise to note here the usual and popular confusion of terms by which the word "Love" is applied not infrequently to phenomena of passion, of

selfishness, or of lust. A man of intellect is free from such confusion, and to men without intellect it would probably be useless to point it out.

Perhaps the plainest logical inference from the hypothesis is that of law. We know by observation that when love does anything it does it in the best way it knows. As we are dealing with an Infinite Intelligence we see that the best way It knows is also absolutely the best way. When It comes to do the same thing over again It does it again in the best way. But there are not two absolutely best ways to do the same thing, so It does it in the same way. We call this repeating of the same way of doing a thing a law of nature.

Mr. Herbert Spencer concludes that "The laws of nature are the modes of action of the Unknowable." The hypothesis agrees with this and adds to it a reason why the modes of action of the Unknowable are always the same. If it were necessary to add emphasis to the teaching of science as to the

"Invariable sequence of phenomena," "The continuity of nature," "The reign of Law," theology could do so.

This hypothesis also explains the existence of man and of evil and the toleration of evil men by an infinite power hostile to evil; for we know experimentally that love desires answering love—if the statement be doubted it can be submitted to experiment. Hence the existence by evolution or creation (evolution is one of many possible modes of creation) of beings possessing the ability to love; ourselves, for instance.

We know experimentally that a forced love (the phrase is a contradiction in terms, but not in fact) is not satisfactory to the receiver. It must be voluntary and capable of being withheld. Hence these beings possessing the ability to love are necessarily so made that they have the power of choice and a field for choice—the power to withhold love without forfeiting existence. By the law of chances (a scientific principle) we are assured that some of these beings will exercise

that power adversely. Thus by the hypothesis the mystery of evil is reduced to facts of ordinary experience, and incidentally a definition of evil is furnished. Beings having the ability to love are necessarily so organized, as has been pointed out above, that they have the power of choice and a field for choice; that is, that they have both the ability and the opportunity to do things contrary to the will of God. Evil is the exercise of that power by choosing and doing those contrary things. Conversely, good is the exercise of that power by choosing and doing things not contrary.

As to the toleration of evil men by an infinite power hostile to evil, we know experimentally—the case of a father and a prodigal son is a trite but accurate example—that the being which refuses to love its Maker is not hated and not destroyed; but is restricted in power and permitted to exist; and loved none the less because of its disobedience, only loved differently, with sorrow mingled in the loving. Hence the hypoth-

esis that God is Love explains the existence of men, and of evil in men, and the creation of a universe so arranged as to give us the opportunity to do evil—facts which we have observed and which we can explain upon no other hypothesis. Since God is Love, evil is a discord of some person with the Infinite and Eternal Energy. Since both parties are sentient this discord causes pain to both: and greater pain to the greater party. In this—the causing of pain to Infinite Love—lies the sinfulness of sin: just as the fault of a boy's running away to sea lies not in the going to sea—which may be a good thing—but in the pain inflicted upon those who love him.

It is noteworthy that the tests applied to the hypothesis that God is Love have so far been its solution of problems which, although recognized by science, may (except the first) fairly be called theological. It might be pleaded that this is a fair application. An hypothesis dealing with one branch of science cannot fairly be required to explain problems in another branch, but only in

its own. For instance, a naturalist's hypothesis as to the origin of species cannot fairly be expected to solve for an astronomer vexed questions in spectrum analysis, nor can an hypothesis as to the nature of God be called upon to stand or fall by laboratory experiments in inorganic or even in organic chemistry. It can be tested by experiment, but the experiments must be in its own department.

It will be observed that only three tests of the hypothesis that the Infinite and Eternal Energy from which all things proceed is love have been given. Scientifically to establish the hypothesis, it would be necessary to test it by every fact known as to the nature of the Unknowable. This has been done in theology and also in practical or "experimental" religion from which theology springs, in a way analogous to the tests which verified the undulatory theory of light; but the results are recorded in technical theological language in theological books and especially books of devotion: with which literature mod-

ern science is rather impatient than familiar. It is self-evidently impossible to repeat those tests here, both because of the space required, and also because the purpose of this work is merely to translate the A B C of theological doctrine from one technical mode of thought and expression to another. Enough has, however, been given to outline the method of examination.

One out of many lines of investigation, however, may be noted: that of prayer. When a prayer is unanswered it proves nothing, for one of the requisites of answered prayer is faith, and faith is a variable and unregistered element which may be wholly lacking. When a prayer, on the contrary, is answered it proves nothing, for coincidences are common. Thus whether any single prayer is answered or unanswered, has no bearing on the question.

Take a man, however, who is striving for what he wishes, and record his successes and failures. They vary with the circumstances and the ability and energy of the

man, but the percentage of success rarely reaches fifty. Usually it is below forty. Most such men fail in nearly two-thirds of what they undertake.

Let this man adopt as a working hypothesis the idea that there is a God who answers prayer, and continue his work, praying for what he wants. Record his successes and failures. They vary with the ability, energy, and opportunities of the man, but the percentage of successes rarely falls below fifty. Usually it is above sixty. Such a man succeeds in nearly two-thirds of what he undertakes. This experiment has been repeated for centuries. It is tried by nearly every "converted" man. It is trying now. Its results are recorded in hundreds of books of devotion—unknown to science. But the experiment is open to anyone to try. Is it to be wondered at, that to those who are familiar with its success, the position of men who doubt that there is a God who answers prayer, is remarkably like that of the negro preacher who holds that the earth is flat and that "*The sun do move!*"?

It is worth notice that St. John's hypothesis no more furnishes ultimate explanations of the problems mentioned than the theory of gravitation furnishes an ultimate explanation of the movements of the stars. We are not sure that it is an attraction, and we do not know what gravitation is. But just as the theory of the attraction of gravitation enables us to solve innumerable problems as to star-movements, and can be studied and experimented with on earth, so St. John's hypothesis enables us to solve innumerable problems as to the actions of the Unknowable, and is subject to earthly experiment.

The matter may be carried back a step further when we inquire what "Love" is; for though human research as yet gives no answer, it has found that real love (the phrase is used to shut out the loose application of the word) is invariably connected with what we call self-sacrifice; a fact which the newly-coined word "Altruism" expresses in a shadowy way. We do not know that love is self-sacrifice. We do not know that

self-sacrifice is love. But we do know that they are invariably found together. This self-sacrifice, however, as has been pointed out in another connection by many pessimistic philosophers, is not really pain-giving but joy-giving, not sacrifice in the usual sense, but happiness: so that a third thing that accompanies the two is joy.

CHAPTER V.

ON THE NATURE OF MAN.

T WAS with a natural wonder, not unlike that of a backwoodsman at a circus, that the world stood agape a few years since on hearing from grave and irreligious professors that immortality was very common upon earth—that, in fact, in every frog-pond are beings, millions of years old, to whom death is an unknown thing except by violence or accident. To be sure the wonder was somewhat dimmed when we learned that these beings were bits of living jelly—*Amoebae*—but the fact remains that there are such bits of live jelly dignified by a name, which when they grow larger than convenient split in two and each half swims off, a perfect being. Each has thus been alive since the creation;

and those that do not meet violence or accident will be alive at the "day of judgment."

It is a matter not without its pleasing side to know that life started immortal. Death was an innovation—a later development. Its introduction tremendously hastened the process of evolution; but it is not in itself a necessary adjunct to life. By rueful experience we have come to think of it as part of the foundation of things; but as a matter of fact it is an innovation.

The practical point in the matter, however, is that the innovation has gotten hold of us. We must die. We are accustomed to look on this as natural, but in the deepest sense it is abnormal and unnatural.

Every good biologist hopes that in time stress of competition will evolve a being which can adjust itself to all changes of the external world. We all look for that happy outcome of the doctrine of the survival of the fittest, a perfected race. Some great world-disaster may intervene, but if it does not, every good and faithful materialist looks for

the time when, by continual survival of the fittest, the race shall have become so fit that it can guard against all changes and thus eliminate death. In the meantime, however, we ourselves are not fit, and must go down, and it is with only a melancholy pleasure that we can congratulate ourselves upon the glorious destiny of the race; much as a man who has missed his train can congratulate himself that the train will get there anyhow.

In short, as we and every other individual of the race that lives or has ever lived are among the unfit, the chance of final deathlessness of the race is of little or no interest to us. It does not concern us personally. By the mismanagement of someone, or it may be by a combination of impersonal laws of nature, we are condemned to die; and as we have a strong dislike for dying, we could wish to find some way to escape that imported and abnormal fate.

The matter is complicated by the fact that we have inherited a certain inborn twist or inclination towards violating the laws of

nature; not only the physical, but even more so that section of the laws of nature which we usually call the moral law. The outcome of this violation is a lack of harmony with our surroundings—an inability to adapt ourselves to certain changes in them. When these changes chance to occur the organism is eliminated; that is, we die. The existence of this inborn twist toward breaking the laws of nature is a matter which can be and is submitted to experiment. Like all degenerative tendencies it is progressive; yielding to it increases it. The materialist explains it as a survival of the instincts of our animal ancestors, and points out that by process of evolution the race will be freed from it in time. This, however, does not personally concern us, for we have it, cannot hope to escape from it, and shall at last be destroyed by it. It, too, seems to be an innovation, since its invariable observed result is death and the *amoebae* do not die. What we could wish would be some method of evolution, not of the race, but of the individual,

by which to eliminate from our own organism this twist, so that we might have no inborn tendency to break the laws of nature. If this could be done we should, like our distant ancestors the *amoebae*, be potentially immortal.

The unfortunate condition of partially evolved man—that is of ourselves—is made worse by a lurking feeling that the body is not all of us. It would be much more comfortable to die and be done. Life would be simpler if we could be sure that death ended it. In the earliest savage ages of mankind, when the power to collect observed facts and draw deductions from them was still small, this seems to have been the usual opinion and man lived down to it. Very early, however, its certainty began to be doubted. A number of observed facts seemed to hint that man is more than mere body. The phenomena of consciousness, the curious instinct of guilt after those violations of the laws of nature which we call “sins,” and, in another sphere, the fact that a man’s body is built up

of food eaten in the past and that its substance is often changed, yet he is still the same man—these, with many other facts, when collated and compared, led to a strong presumption that man is something more than his material body. “The Soul” has never been discovered by chemical analysis or found in the dissecting room; but neither has “A Thought,” or “Life.” Yet life and thought exist. This non-discovery may be because chemical and anatomical investigation has mostly dealt with specimens without thought and from which the soul and life have fled—namely, with corpses; which might not inaptly be compared to an investigation settling that there are no such things as oysters because the oyster shells in city trash-barrels are invariably found empty.

This hypothesis—that man has a soul—explains so many facts which can be explained in no other way that it is the generally accepted opinion all the world over. The great World-religions, Heathen as well as Christian, all agree on man’s having a

soul because it is the best working hypothesis yet found to explain the observed facts. They disagree on so many things, by the way, that anything they agree on must have considerable evidence for it.

It is perhaps worth remark that the existence of the soul is here spoken of as an hypothesis. Many scientific men deny its existence as a fact, because the scientific verdict about it is that it is "not proven," but the logical fault in such reasoning is plain. Moreover, to any person noting only empty oyster-shells, the existence of oysters is "not proven." There can be no doubt that whether proven or not it explains more of the observed facts about man than any other hypothesis known to us; and it is a good scientific principle to adopt the thing that best explains the facts for a working hypothesis; at least until a better one is found.

We have to face, then, the somewhat uncomfortable probability that man has a soul. This complicates life. It would be much simpler to live if it were certain that we were

soulless. We could then gratify certain morbid tastes which we have all inherited or acquired, and which lead us to break the laws of nature, knowing that the worst that could happen to us would be to die and be done with life a little sooner than otherwise. As it is, however, the weight of evidence goes to show that man exists after death; and an eternity spent in gratifying morbid desires which break natural laws, and in bearing the punishments nature always inflicts for her laws when broken, is as terrible as the most lurid pulpit descriptions of hell. The practical concensus of opinion of mankind is that the evidence is strong enough to make the risk too great to run; and as a result the vast majority of mankind is engaged in more or less successfully combating those morbid desires or that innate twist toward breaking the laws of nature.

There is, of course, a bright side to the possibilities of the case. By practical experiment we know that we are unable to rival the deathlessness of the *amoebae*, and must

die. What we should like would be some method of evolution, not of the race but of ourselves, by which we could get rid of this morbid twist toward breaking the laws of nature; but we have found by experiment that death cuts the process short. There are several methods by which it is claimed that men may advance some way along the path of this personal evolution, but none of us has time to reach the goal. We die first. If, however, death does not annihilate a man, there is room for the process to continue, so that in time he may become free from this morbid twist inherited or acquired, and may stand, free, without any wish to violate natural laws. Such a man or "Soul" would be in a most enviable position; happy, because not in conflict with any law of nature, and free to make an unbiased scientific investigation of the Cosmos and, as accurate knowledge gives power, able in time to control it even to the point of assuming a body again, and also able to gain some knowledge of the Infinite and Eternal Energy which supports it.

It is worth incidental mention that these methods of personal evolution are all worthless if the primitive idea that death ends all be correct. We have proved by experiment that no one has time fully to cast out from his nature the tendency to break natural laws. Death comes and cuts the process short. Thus every method is doomed to failure in this life. It is only when a man's attention is directed to the probability that death does not end all, and therefore that there is room for personal evolution to work to success, that methods of personal evolution become of any interest to him. The interest, however, becomes great as soon as he has grasped the fact that, on the scientific principle of adopting the thing that best explains the facts as a working hypothesis, the hypothesis of the existence of the soul is rightly adopted by mankind.

Existence after death, let it be repeated, is spoken of as an hypothesis. It is not fully proven by those facts admitted by science and mentioned here, and the writer does not

wish to be so shallow a thinker as to advance it as thus proven. But no one is so shallow a thinker as not to know that it is by far the most probable hypothesis. It is more likely that we exist after death than that we do not—considerably more likely. And so men act upon this with more or less wisdom; just as men knowing that to-night will probably be followed by to-morrow, make their preparations for that morrow, some with folly and some with good sense.

It is not hoped by the writer that the foregoing presentation of the doctrines of Original Sin, Damnation, Immortality of the Soul, Resurrection and the Beatific Vision, will revolutionize the views or the character of any who may chance to read it. Nor is it even supposed that it will greatly affect any one: it takes far more to affect a man's life than a few words printed in a book. But if the paragraphs have served to show that some of the great theological doctrines as to the nature of man,—doctrines from which most men nowadays in-

stinctively sheer off as a schoolboy does from an abstruse problem in mathematics—if they have shown that these grand, turgid, wonderful, involved and generally-to-be-avoided doctrines, when translated out of theological language into more familiar speech, really sound very simple and even more or less true, then the purpose of this work is served; and if the method accomplish so much, some abler hand may take it up and so use it as to bring home the truths of religion to the nation.

Summing up the matters treated of so far: we have arrived at the conclusion that an Infinite and Eternal Energy exists. It is a power not ourselves, and makes for righteousness. It is the basis of all things. Its nature is something unknown to us and greater than personality, not less, so that it is an inaccurate but not an unfair use of words to say that It is more personal than personality, or the only real Person. The most logical hypothesis, rising to the rank of a theory, is that the essence or nature of the only real Person is Love. Man is one of its

products. Death, to which man and most of the lower animals are subject, is an innovation. Experiment has shown that there exists in man a tendency to violate the laws of nature, which violation causes suffering and death, and these can only be gotten rid of by getting rid of the tendency. Experiment has shown that to be impossible in this life. Experiment has shown, however, that it is a tenable hypothesis rising to the importance of a theory that man exists after physical death. It is a scientific principle to take that which best explains the facts as a working hypothesis. The theories that God is Love, and that man exists after death, best explain the known facts. Thus the scientific sanction for acting upon them is perfect.

All of which very triumphant logical work is not expected to be convincing. Few are convinced by logic—at least, by good logic. But though not convincing, yet careful thought will show it to be true.

CHAPTER VI.

FURTHER INQUIRY INTO THE NATURE OF GOD.

C^HAT that hypothesis which best explains the facts should be assumed as a basis for further investigation is good science; to handle a working hypothesis as if it were an infallible truth, however, is unscientific. Thus the working hypotheses that God is Love and that man exists after death have the strongest possible scientific sanction when used merely as working hypotheses; that is, when used as guides for action and experiment. The strictest scientist and the most fervid Christian can have no rational quarrel in regard to the necessity of squaring all action to these two things: that God is Love, and that man is immortal. The quarrel

comes on whether these things are to be styled working hypotheses or revealed truths.

This quarrel is essentially one between two highly specialized modes of technical expression which are irreconcilable. But it is possible to avoid both modes of statement, and merely to say that the highest commands of both science and religion equally require a life assuming that God is Love, and that man is immortal.

It is a further fact that hardly needs demonstration that man is not at present able to adjust himself to all changes; but is subject to partial or complete lack of harmony with environment: that is, to pain and death. Discord with the physical environment produces physical pain and physical death; discord with that part of the environment which we call moral or spiritual produces moral or spiritual pain or death. This discord is not without cause, since no phenomena are causeless. The cause of this discord is inherited, and we learn experimentally that in some cases it is added to.

It has no technical scientific name. In theology it is called Original Sin.

These things being so, there follows from them a necessary inference. The Infinite and Eternal Energy, as is well known, has provided a method of race-evolution by which the cause or causes of this discord may be eliminated from the race; but because Its nature is Love, and we know experimentally that love cares for the individual, it is a necessary inference that there is also some method of evolution by which this discord and its causes can be eliminated from the individual. Since we know experimentally that no method is complete before death, the inference that its completion is at or after death is unavoidable.

Now it is the law of evolution that it works from a mysterious beginning (who has solved the mystery of biogenesis?) by an orderly sequence of cause and effect. This particular kind of evolution should follow the law. There are two ways of bringing about harmony of an organism with its en-

vironment. One is by doing away with changes in the environment. The other is by infusing new vitality, energy, and power of adjustment to change into the organism. In regard to man we note experimentally that changes in environment are not done away. Since, as Mr. Spencer points out, the Unknowable is the basis of all energy, it follows that any infusion of energy must be an infusion of the Unknowable which is its basis.

Mr. Spencer was not the first to hold that the Unknowable is the basis of all energy, and hence to imply that fresh energy, vitality, and power of adjustment must be in some way caused by an infusion of that Infinite and Eternal Energy, which is the basis of all. The fact is obvious and has not escaped the thoughts of men from the earliest times; and it is a point not without its humorous aspect that Mr. Spencer, presumably quite without intention, follows the lead of both the Upanishad and the Old Testament in announcing it. In regard to this statement as to the Upanishad, see the meditations on

Om, in the first ten pages of Max Müller's translation.

It is, then, a necessary inference from known facts fairly called scientific, that God has furnished some method of individual evolution in this life, completed at or after death, starting from a mysterious beginning, working by orderly sequence of cause and effect and infusing new energy, vitality, and power of adjustment into the individual by infusing into him a greater portion of the nature of God, the final outcome of the process being the elimination of discord and the production of permanent or "eternal" harmony with environment. A reference to the deductions from the hypothesis that God is Love will show that the steps in such evolution will naturally spring out of the conditions, and will not be forced upon the individual.

Lest this conclusion should seem to be claimed as a new discovery, it is worth while to point out that there are few more universally admitted or older. Every nation origin-

ally based pride of race on the claim that it had more of God in it than had the other nations. Birth was traced from an inspired patriarch, or else a demi-god. In fact, if for "God" we substitute the phrase "Infinite and Eternal Energy," it will at once be seen that the present race-pride of the Anglo-Saxons is based on the belief that we have by inheritance more of the infinite and eternal energy than have other races. The perception of this law antedates history, and those first and sternest old puritans who called themselves "Children of Light—Aryans," recognized it fully.

Before going further it is perhaps well to consider another deduction from the hypothesis that God is Love. It is that God never alters any action, His own or that of any other person.

The fact that this is a deduction will be seen by a little thought. It is merely a mode of stating the fact that God works by law. Effects follow causes in a determined and not an irregular manner. If the final effect is

to be altered some new cause must be brought to bear. The force and exact meaning of the deduction can perhaps be shown by an illustration.

Let us imagine a man who has just placed the proper proportions of sulphur, nitre, and charcoal in a mixer, and started the machinery. In a moment of remorse he decides that he does not want to make gunpowder. Now he may either stop the machinery or introduce some new element—say sawdust.

Stopping the machinery is intended to parallel altering the action. God never stops the machinery. In other words, it is an observed fact that the chain of law, of cause and effect, is never broken. New effects are produced by the introduction of new causes: not by any change in the law of causation. It was possibly from an observance of this fact, which is a very easily noted one in natural religion, that some legislator drew the idea of the laws of the Medes and Persians, which were proverbially never revoked. Thus when a massacre had been or-

dered by Ahasuerus for a certain date, the order was rescinded, not by cancellation, but by command that the victims should resist. The massacre did not succeed.

The working hypothesis that God is Love involves, then, the almost mathematical inference that there exists a method of individual evolution for eliminating "Sin"—that is, violation of the laws of our physical, mental, and spiritual nature, and the tendency which causes this violation—by an infusion of energy and vitality necessarily involving an infusion of the nature of God. From what we know by experiment of the nature of Love, we know that this infusion must be applicable, not to a single clan or race, but to every individual. Also (see chapter on the nature of God) we know that the first step in this course of evolution must be made by the individual.

We find experimentally that God raises individuals from a lower to a higher grade of life by a process of evolution. For this reason we judge that there is no gap in nature,

and that this method inferred above must follow the law. But if it is a method of evolution we at once know a good deal about it. We are not at sea in dealing with methods of evolution. Our knowledge of the way a new quality, for instance, is evolved may be called fairly exact.

The quality first occurs, without known cause, in an individual. It usually appears in a rudimentary form, but sometimes, as in the case of "Sports" or "Freaks," the form is not rudimentary but fully developed. From that individual it passes, by heredity, to others. It is fostered by the environment, but transmitted by generation and inheritance. Before the formulation of the theory of evolution the thought of the world had recognized this and, as mentioned above, we have numerous cases of "Holy Nations" believing themselves possessed of inherent spiritual energy and vitality by physical heredity; in fact it is evident from what we know of evolution that, if the Infinite and Eternal Energy is to transmit to us such vitality, it

will be by the law of birth and heredity. It is equally evident, however, that a method of evolution applicable to every individual cannot proceed by a method of physical heredity, which of necessity confines it to a single clan or race. We are thus led by the theory of evolution to look for some method of generation and of heredity from an individual which shall be independent of physical birth.

Analogies to such a method are claimed in the combination and reaction of some of the unicellular organisms, but a tolerable parallel is best seen in the mental action of mankind, where we are all familiar with the spectacle of the ideas of one man generating the same or like ideas in the minds of others without physical birth. These ideas influence action, often to the extent of the destruction or preservation of the individual. They are not material, they cannot be weighed and measured, they are not subject to exact definition. Thus, in a certain sense, they do not come within the province of science; yet the experience of generations proves that they

are potent forces of nature, and with all natural forces science will some day deal. The propagation of the idea of liberty, for example, has been partially traced. Its origin is lost, but we see through all history how it is generated in one mind by contagion from another when the conditions are favorable, and how, when the conditions are not favorable, the idea is not born.

The things we do not know about God are incalculable, but the things we do know have led us to the conclusion that their rational explanation demands the existence of a well-known method of personal evolution much more intimate and searching (since it involves Himself), than what is usually called "religion," and one which infuses energy and vitality into the individual by inheritance from another individual through a process faintly analogous to physical birth, and more nearly so to the transmission of ideas. The nearest and best analogy to the process was furnished some centuries ago by a teacher of Judea

who compared it to the grafting of a branch on an olive tree or a twig on a grape vine; by which the grafted part receives a certain infusion of the life of the other and lives with its own vitality governed, reinforced, and sustained by the vitality of the vine or tree.

There is in addition a matter in regard to the nature of the Unknowable which the philosopher Haegel has pointed out and which throws some light on this subject. With long and technical discussion Haegel arrives at the conclusion—perfectly well known to mankind before he reached it—that things exist, as far as we are concerned, because of their differences. The world is full of a number of things because the things are different. If they were all the same the world would vanish from our knowledge—for we only perceive things by their differences. If, in addition to this, the difference of number were to cease there would be only one thing, and intelligence would vanish; for the existence of intelligence depends on the existence

of two things: the intelligent person, and the thing on which his intelligence is exercised. Energy would cease, for energy requires for its existence something besides itself. In short, nothing would exist.

Now the Cosmos bears in it the marks of an Infinite and Eternal Energy. This Infinite and Eternal Energy, which has all things as its product, could not have been homogeneous. It must have been differentiated in some way, so as to react upon itself. Haegel pointed this out. In addition, since the reaction of two bodies reaches a state of poise, but the reactions of three bodies are immeasurable, we know that the Infinite and Eternal Energy must have been differentiated in two or more ways; it must be at least threefold.

A different statement of the same fact can be made in the language of the hypothesis that God is Love. Love implies a personality and requires love for its existence. Thus the Infinite and Eternal Love, in the ages past, must have composed and existed

between at least two personalities and probably between three, each capable of personal action yet each of the same essence; just as the North and South Atlantic, whose interaction in the Gulf Stream makes Europe habitable, are composed of one and the same sea water.

This, in technical theological language, is called the doctrine of the Trinity. It is denied on all sides because of its incomprehensibility; but, when divested of its technical phrasing, an analogy for it can be readily found.

No one denies that there are five oceans. They are sufficiently differentiated to be sharply defined. The North Atlantic is not the South Pacific, nor by any stretch of human credulity can they be made the same. Yet there is a type of human mind which denies that there can be three persons and one God, three beings and one substance, and at the same time finds no difficulty in accepting the fact that there are five oceans, and that they are all one "Sea."

It is plain, then, that the Infinite and Eternal Energy must be differentiated into more than two of those centres of activity which we call personalities; although Herbert Spencer only reiterated the teaching of St. John when he pointed out that these centers of activity differ from human personalities in being so much more centred, broader, deeper, more intensified, that he refused to apply the word “Personality” to them as containing belittling human associations which make it unworthy of them. As we have no other word, however, and as there is a real analogy between the higher forms of human activity and the lower modes of action of the Divine, the mass of mankind has continued to use the word as the nearest approach to the fact of which human language is capable, or which the human brain can clearly conceive.

We are led, then, by the facts of nature, to look for some process of individual evolution completed at or after death, and deriving its energy by a process analogous to grafting —a sort of artificial yet vital and real hered-

ity—from one of the three persons of the threefold Divine Energy or Personality. It will be seen that it is only necessary to derive this energy from one by the analogy of the Oceans; for in order to fill a canal with sea-water it is not necessary to establish independent connection with all oceans—Atlantic, Pacific, Indian, Arctic and Antarctic—but merely with one of them.

The original individual in whose person this method of evolution begins must differ from all other individuals in such a way as to permit to each an artificial, yet vital, heredity from Himself—much as a vine differs from its grafted branches. He must be connected with the Infinite and Eternal Energy, not as a branch is connected with a vine or an animal with its species, but as an animal or vine is connected with its own inherent and vital forces. These dwell in the vine, the vine is their embodiment, they ARE the vine. Thus this individual would be indwelt by, would in fact BE, one of the centres of activity or Personalities of the threefold Infinite and

Eternal Energy. It is noteworthy that this fact has been appreciated by human intellect throughout all history, nearly every religion pointing back or forward to some divine incarnation as a necessary consequence of the fact that the Energy, which is the basis of all things, is not only differentiated (from the perversion of which fact comes polytheism) and Eternal, but also Infinite.

It is worth remark that a systematic arrangement of human knowledge on any subject can properly be called science; the natures and relations of God and man make up religion; and thus the conclusions reached above can be called either religious or scientific, whichever you please. If stated as infallible truths they arouse scientific opposition. If stated merely as a working hypothesis, even as the most tenable hypothesis, they arouse religious opposition. But if stated as the reasonable conclusions from the known facts, it is submitted that they should arouse no opposition at all.

CHAPTER VII.

RELATIONS BETWEEN GOD AND MAN.

IT WOULD be well to note that these writings do not aim at adding anything to knowledge. The writer has no knowledge to advance, and, so far from being novel, the chief deductions mentioned gain whatever value they may have from the fact that they are the weighed and tested conclusions of mankind. But, as a cautious attempt at translating familiar human conclusions out of theological technical terms into those made familiar by popular science, this work may have interest to a class of readers who would as soon think of reading Sanskrit as theology. It may even be that some of the statements may strike such readers as novel. Some of us can recall the time when we re-

garded the multiplication table as a new discovery. The hills are immeasurably old, but they are new to each new traveler.

It is pleasing to note that the scientific position that the Infinite and Eternal Energy is the basis of all things necessarily involves the fact that there must be relations between God and man, and therefore a religion. It is a scientific principle that between cause and effect there is always a relation, and man is a product and effect of the Infinite and Eternal Cause. Thus it is unnecessary to translate the usual theological arguments for the fact that a true religion must exist, since science bears testimony to it with all the force of an impassive witness. This real religion must be immeasurably close and intimate, for man is sustained in every minutest process and action by the laws of nature, and "The laws of nature are the modes of action of the Unknowable."

It will be seen that various degrees of knowledge of the relations between God and man must produce various systematic ar-

rangements of that knowledge, or “Religions.” These “religions” will be true, as far as they go, but compared with the full knowledge of the relations between God and men—with the Religion whose possibility we infer from science—they will be false in varying degrees. Thus fetish worship and ancestor worship are recognitions of the fact that “There is a power not ourselves,” but fail to recognize that it “Makes for righteousness,” or that it is an “Infinite and Eternal Energy.” Hindu, Greek, and Roman polytheisms are, or were, recognitions of the presence of a power not ourselves, but of which we are the products—a power differentiated into centres of activity resembling personalities; but they failed to realize that the power was a unit under its diversity, and a short study of the Greek myths or Hindu customs will prove to any one that they had no suspicion that it “Makes for righteousness.” Zoroaster never discovered that the Infinite and Eternal Energy was the basis of all things. Buddhism is a religion of negation and des-

pair. That the energy which caused the Cosmos "Makes for righteousness," that the very existence of the Cosmos proves that the constructive tendencies outweigh the destructive, that any personal evolution must be, not by negation, but by infusion of energy and vitality from the Infinite and Eternal Energy, all these seem to have escaped its thinkers. Mohammedanism is a reaction from polytheism, and takes no account of any differentiation of the Unknowable. It will thus be seen that all of the great world-religions except two—those of Christ and Mohammed—fail to take account of all those facts in regard to the nature of the Unknowable, weighed, tested, and announced, by Matthew Arnold and Herbert Spencer. They are thus partially true, since even fetishism recognizes one of the facts; but their truth is only partial, and their conclusions, in that they deny known scientific facts in regard to God, may be dismissed as relatively false.

The best working hypothesis obtainable by scientific means as to the relations be-

tween God and man is this, that there is a mode of personal evolution working through life, completed at or after death, applicable to every individual, and producing, by a process of artificial heredity not unlike grafting, an influx of energy and vitality from the Infinite and Eternal Energy; the effect of this influx, when unhindered, being the elimination of the hereditary tendency to break natural laws. The theory as to the Nature of the Unknowable, which may be briefly stated in the words "God is Love," implies the existence of such a mode, its success in some cases, its rejection in others, and, either before or after death, its presentation in some form to every individual of the human race, to be by each accepted or rejected. This last statement, while a necessary inference from the theory that God is Love, will be received with anathema by many trained in the theological mode of technical expression. To such it is recommended that they read the third chapter of the First Epistle of St. Peter, and ponder on the necessary implications thereof, as

also the statement of St. Paul that the heathen are judged by the light of their own consciences, and the fact that there are just men in all races (God hath not left Himself without witness in any nation), counterchecked by the statement that there is no salvation without Christ. It is noteworthy that the idea of liberty, however strenuously presented, does not propagate in uncongenial minds, but minds prepared for it make it a part of themselves when it comes. The same may be said of this inheritance of Divine Energy.

A review of the dominant religions of the world—all of which are usually looked upon as hopelessly unscientific—when occurring in a work on that “Religion” whose existence we infer from Science, will probably arouse amusement not unlike that which comes from a consideration of children’s plays in a work on Sociology. Yet children’s plays throw valuable light on some social problems. Now, since there is every reason to suppose that this mode of evolution of which we speak is presented to many individuals here and now,

it follows that it should be the heart or vital centre of some one of the world's dominant religions. Experiment shows, as every student of comparative religion knows well, that in any religion the vital inner core tends to be overlaid by more or less formal imitations based on misunderstandings and perversions, so that it is necessary to compare the inner, as distinguished from the outer, element of religions to eliminate accidental variations. This has been attempted above with the conclusion that all the dominant religions, except those of Christ and Mahomet, deny some of those known facts in regard to the nature of God which may fairly be called authoritative conclusions of Science.

We know that a mode of individual evolution deriving energy from a Person of the Divine Energy would begin in an individual, for we know the law of evolution. It would form a new variety of mankind. This variety would in time supplant all others; but between its first appearance and its gradual triumph there would be much time when it

would co-exist with others. Thus, for a while, it would be only one of several of the great spiritual varieties or religions of the world. Examining the great religions we find that all, except those of Christ and Mahomet, go counter to definite facts in regard to the nature of God, arrived at not from religious but from scientific investigation, and announced by Herbert Spencer and Matthew Arnold; while Islam and some forms of Christianity go counter to what we know of the differentiation of the Unknowable, and Islam and all forms of popular Christianity go counter to what we know of the nature of God by incorrigible and essential anthropomorphism. The anathema with which this conclusion will be received by many who have been trained in the technical theological methods can only be compared to the reproof with which a professor would meet a schoolboy who ventured to correct him in his own specialty. Yet the schoolboy might refer to the text-book.

It is matter for interest and curiosity to

note the attacks upon anthropomorphic religion by those of the scientific ranks in whom a real and vivid love for truth has worked to its final consequence, and produced an active hatred of falsehood. Such men reform Christian thought as the old prophets reformed the Jewish religion, but they are no more in antagonism with Christianity than Jeremiah was with Jehovah. Not all minds are logical, some minds are influenced by self-interest, and eighteen centuries of Christian thought have given time for many illogical and even interested deductions to be formulated and presented as Christianity. Minds which hold such deductions present them as part of the Christian faith, and think of disproofs of them as temporary triumphs of some evil power over the Christian faith; much as the Sanhedrim regarded the logical and accurate remarks of Jesus on their traditions as direct attacks on the religion of Jehovah. Christ and the prophets, however, understood that they were not attacking the religion of Jehovah, but false deductions there-

from; while it is to be regretted that many scientific men have rested under the impression that, in disproving the ideas popularly presented as Christianity, they were disproving Christianity itself.

One false deduction presented as Christianity—that in regard to Faith—has been spoken of before. Faith is not some mysterious entity, but a mental position necessary both to religion and science. Its presentation as primarily a mysterious religious force is inaccurate.

A second false deduction is that in regard to the nature of inspiration. That the Infinite and Eternal Energy must communicate with man is self-evident from the fact that man is Its product, not a product finished and left, but one supported and governed by “The modes of action of the Unknowable,” as Mr. Spencer styles the laws of nature. Since thought and intellect are parts of man’s being, there must be some communication of the Unknowable with the intellect of man. If these communications ever rise above

the threshold of consciousness, some form of what is usually called inspiration must exist. It is matter of interest in this connection to turn aside a moment, and examine into the nature of inspiration ; not as that nature is falsely deduced from scripture, but as it is really deduced, translating as far as possible from the theological into the scientific mode of expression. To phrase it differently, the popular theory of inspiration is so widely and so justly denied both by scientific men and others, that it is worth while pointing out the theological position on the subject.

Revelation or “Unveiling” is, roughly, the giving a man insight into some part of the mind or plans of God. It is thus a rising above the threshold of consciousness of some communication of the Unknowable. Any communication to others of this information by such a man, whether in speech or writing, is called inspired, and the man himself, by a somewhat looser use of the word, is called inspired also. The documents concerned contain occasional accounts of communications

from the Unknowable which do not fully rise above the threshold of consciousness. Thus we are expressly told that when the high priest said of Christ, "It is expedient that one man die that the whole people perish not," he prophesied, and did not know it. Here was no conscious revelation. A higher phase is that of Pharaoh relating his dream to Joseph. The dream was a revelation, the words were Pharaoh's, the truth was God's. The source of the information had not risen above Pharaoh's threshold of consciousness. In another place it is recorded that the artisans who constructed the Mosaic Tabernacle were God-guided. The term "Inspired" is usually refused to their work, however, as being work dealing with the material universe rather than with the spiritual. The phrase, "An inspired candlestick," would be as incongruous as the phrase "An inspired candlestick-maker."

It is evident that, if revelation occur, inspiration follows as a natural consequence. It is equally evident that, if the communica-

tions of the Unknowable with the mind or intellect of man ever rise above the threshold of consciousness, revelation must occur. As no scientific man, admitting revelation, could quarrel for a moment with the inspiration which comes from it, the question from a scientific point of view becomes an examination as to whether those communications from the Unknowable which support the mind of man ever rise above the threshold of consciousness.

The laws of nature are the modes of action of the Unknowable. The discovery of a law of nature is the discovery of a mode of action of the Unknowable. The method by which new laws of nature are discovered is not unknown to us. They do not reveal themselves to all men, but only to men specially prepared. They are not found out by mediocre minds but by men of genius, and not of indiscriminate genius, but of genius along the lines on which the law works. For instance, a man of military genius, however great a general, is not found to make great scientific discoveries.

The preparation required is almost lifelong. It consists of accumulation of vast stores of facts already known, and of a certain mental transformation or "Education" of the individual, brought about during the acquiring of those facts. This alone only fits a man for the accumulation, possibly for the discovery, of new facts. To discover the law governing those facts requires something more—genius—scientific perception—scientific imagination working along logical lines—call it what you will. Some day, while pondering on the facts, there comes either in dim glimpses or more often like a sudden illumination the perception of the law that underlies them. This is formulated, tested, established, announced, and the world has advanced a step in the knowledge of God's modes of action in the physical universe; or else it is formulated, tested, and not established; and it is seen that the scientific perception of the man who conceived it was faulty. The preparation and ability necessary to the discovery of new

natural laws so marks a man that it is observed that many trained on the same lines can tell with considerable accuracy by the nature and style of his announcement, even before the supposed law is tested, whether his scientific perception is or is not accurate. The history of science is filled with the record of false theories, supposed to be real visions or perceptions of the modes of action of the Unknowable. The fact that we now know them to be false implies that there are true laws which we can, at least partially, recognize. Each true law has been formulated by a man across whose mind has flashed a perception of a mode of action of the Unknowable. The perception conveys the law and the power accurately to tell the law, for we can tell what we fully understand. The word "Inspired" is not applied to such a scientific man, or to his formulation of a law, for the same reason that it is not applied to the candlestick or candlestick-maker of the Pentateuch.

Now the actions of the Unknowable are

not confined to material phenomena. "Moral," "Spiritual," or "Non-material" phenomena are also based on the Unknowable. These modes of action of the Unknowable do not reveal themselves to all men but only to men specially prepared; not to mediocre men, but to men of genius along spiritual lines. The preparation required is almost life-long. It consists of accumulation of a vast store of moral or spiritual facts and a certain mental transformation brought about during their accumulation. This fits a man for transmission of these facts and possibly for the discovery of more. To discover the laws underlying those facts—underlying the dealings of God with man—requires something else. Call it "Spiritual perception," "Spiritual insight," "Revelation," what you will. Some day, while pondering on the facts, there comes in dim glimpses, or more often like a sudden illumination, the perception of the law that underlies them—the mode of action of the Infinite and Eternal Energy which causes

them. This is formulated, announced, tested, and established, and the world has moved forward a step in the knowledge of God's mode of action in the spiritual universe; or else it is formulated, announced, and not borne out by experience, and it is seen that the inspiration of the false prophet who conceived it was not from God. The preparation and ability requisite for revelation so marks a man that many trained along spiritual lines can tell with considerable accuracy by the nature and style of the writing whether the inspiration be true or false, even before time and experience have tested it. The revelation conveys the law and the power accurately to tell the law; we can tell what we understand. Because a man has seen scientific truth his message is true, but even Newton may have inaccuracies in style and illustration. The message is truth. The brain that saw the truth can tell it. Misspellings, misprints, verbal alterations, Newtonian English—none of them affect the truth of the law of gravitation. If it should be proved

that not Sir Isaac Newton but some other man wrote the treatise and made the discovery, the law of gravitation would still govern the swinging planets, and the world of men. So also if Isaiah's Hebrew proved faulty, his style obscure, his illustrations untrue, and his book written by some unknown man, the inspiration of the book of the prophet Isaiah would not be affected in the slightest.

It is submitted that since the law of revelation is found to govern science it cannot be unscientific, and that it is not unscientific to hold that God has communicated information of His modes of action in the "Spiritual" world to certain men, record of which communication exists in certain documents at the present day.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE EXPERIMENTAL METHOD IN RELIGION.

CHAT there are relations between God and man; that these relations are immeasurably more vital and intimate than what is usually called “Religion;” that part of their law can be learned from documents; that there is a future life, and that a right or wrong use of those relations decides whether that life be one of happiness or of misery—these things are necessary deductions from what may be fairly called scientific conclusions as to the nature of the Unknowable. They are the hypotheses which come nearest to explaining the observed facts, and so long as they are presented merely as tentative, working hypotheses, it is not apprehended that any scientific man will object to

them. Nay, more, the most tenable working hypothesis is that these relations cluster around one individual of the human race, and energy and vitality can be derived from him by a process of pseudo-heredity presenting analogies both to transmission of ideas and to grafting.

Now so long as these hypotheses are presented with due humility, as working hypotheses should be presented, they arouse no particular hostility. It is believed that any who care to verify the reasoning and the experiments which lead to them will agree that the balance of evidence inclines in their favor. Only one thing difficult of apprehension occurs in them. It has been found that minds not acute apprehend but slowly the theory that God is Love, and are prone to surround it, when accepted, with a cloud of misconceptions and false deductions. In regard to all the other theories advanced and deductions made here, the reasoning is simple and the logical connection plain. Of course a deduction drawn from an hypothesis depends

for its establishment upon the validity of that hypothesis; but so self-evident are the steps which lead to those deductions that it is possible that some readers have not identified in this presentation the doctrines of the Incarnation, the Hypostatic Union, the Indwelling of the Word, the reception of Saving Grace and many others.

It will be seen that if the root-hypotheses are true the rest necessarily follows, and that the balance of probability inclines somewhat toward the truth of the root-hypotheses. It is, therefore, not too much to claim that when presented in this way—as a tissue of tentative theory and deduction ending in a working hypothesis—the main principles of theology are not unscientific. Even this much is a gain; for the main principles of theology are usually thought too unscientific for toleration. It is worth notice that upon the principle of adopting that which best explains the facts as a working hypothesis, and then acting upon it, the scientific sanction for the Christian position as to life and action is perfect.

The Christian world, however, does not present these matters as working hypotheses. On the contrary it advances them with all the certainty, and twice the assurance, with which the scientific world thunders forth the theory of evolution. As working hypotheses they are tenable, even probable; but whence comes the change by which they are advanced as certainties? Argument, from the time of Christ to the present day, has failed to bring out any universal solvent of all difficulties which might give a philosophical cause for announcing them as certainties. Yet either there are reasonable causes, or else, by some strange alchemy, the whole human race when dealing with religious matters lays down its human reason. It is probable that this latter proposition, while seemingly held by the majority of scientific men, is essentially unscientific.

Now there is a method by which all hypotheses are dealt with and tested. It is, as far as we know, the only method of permanent value. It was announced by Aristotle,

re-announced by Lord Bacon, and enforced by St. Paul. It gives—humanly speaking—certainty as to the matters tested, and its name is the “Experimental Method.”

The experimental method did not appear in the world with Aristotle; the first savage who ever tried two things to see which was best, had the idea. It is not confined to scientific matters; on the contrary, it is the basis not only of scientific but also of religious certainty. By courses of experiment—compared to which for duration and for number of separate experimenters those of modern science are the passing amusements of a coterie—every proposition of Christianity has been tested, confirmed, assailed, re-tested, and re-established many times. The experiments are open now. Any one is free to try them. There are many hundreds of them, each adding its item to the mass of conclusions. To those who have tried many of them, the teachings of Christianity appear no more tentative or hypothetical than any other established truths.

It is noteworthy that the experiment must bear upon the hypothesis. An experiment cannot be called upon to settle a question with which it has no connection. Certain illogical advocates of religion gained great and deserved ridicule among scientific men when they attempted to settle the astronomical theories of Galileo by a process of Old Testament exegesis. It is not unnatural that certain illogical advocates of science gain great and deserved ridicule among theologians when they attempt to settle points of Old Testament exegesis by an application of even the modern development of the astronomical theory of Galileo.

It is self-evidently impossible to point out here all the experiments made. They may be found recorded in books of theology and devotion; recorded, however, in the technical phrasing of theology. A simple one, which can be translated into popular language more readily than most, is that which deals with prophecy.

Take the Christian books. Determine

the latest date to which they can be assigned. If they contain correct predictions of events which at that date were future, the possible explanations are designed coincidence, undesigned coincidence, happy forecast, interpolation of "predictions" after the event, or prophecy.

Undesigned coincidence is eliminated by the number of predictions. One coincidence was to be expected, two are likely, three not improbable, ten barely possible, a hundred unthinkable. Designed coincidence is eliminated by the circumstances of the fulfilment. If the persons who fulfilled the predictions were ignorant of the predictions, hostile to them, or unable to control the details of their own fate, they could not have purposely fulfilled them. Forecast is eliminated by detail. If a man predict that an acquaintance will be hanged he may show his own penetration; if he add the approximate time the penetration is great; but if he correctly give cause, place, costumes, action of executioners, and minute and trivial details of acci-

dental circumstance, it is beyond the power of forecast of the human brain. Interpolation in the manuscripts is eliminated by textual criticism. There remains, then, the fact that a man who undertakes such an experimental investigation with the same painstaking care that he would give to a problem in biology will probably rise from his study, as many thousands have risen before him, with the conviction that the usual scientific view as to the existence of an intellect which foresees and communicates to man certain future facts should be almost completely recast. It may be added that a man who will not undertake such an investigation ought not, in justice, to deride the conclusions of those who do.

In dealing with the Christian records, the attention is soon called to an authoritative conclusion of Science which is so true, so self-evident, so opposed to the false Anthropomorphic or Heathen or Popular idea of God and of religion, and so carefully, logically,—(and technically)—asserted by theology, that

the misunderstanding between scientific and religious teachers as to it has all the elements of humor. It is this: that the Infinite and Eternal Energy works by law. Laws of nature are the modes of action of the Unknowable. They depend upon His character. Thus a reversal of a law of nature is unthinkable. It involves a denial of the character of God. It would imply wavering and irresolution in Him who is the basis of all things, and in whom there is no wavering neither any shadow of turning. Belief in it would be unscientific. "Nay, more," add the theologians, "it would hardly be too much to call it blasphemous."

This being so, it will at once be seen that the Anthropomorphic or Popular theory, which regards miracles as reversals of the laws of nature, is not only unscientific but irreligious. When set face to face with that theory, and required to believe either that reversals of the laws of nature occurred or that the narratives are not true, the natural and prompt conclusion of men who understand

that the Infinite and Eternal Energy works by law is that the narratives are not true; the promptness of this conclusion being in exact proportion to the clearness with which the man understands the reign of law in nature, and the consequent reverence in which he holds the intellect and rationality of God. Even a superficial acquaintance with literary criticism, however, convinces the reader that the untruth of the narrative is not intentional. The quaint and gentle narratives bear all the marks of truth except that they seem to contradict the nature of God. It cannot be that reversals of the laws of nature occur; but to account for the evident belief of the writers in their own stories, persons who think that miracles are reversals of nature have presented many theories. They are records made in good faith, but merely records of traditions, and garbled traditions at that. They are re-edited interpolations. They are forgeries so skilful that the men who made them persuaded themselves that they must be true. They are allegories. They are sun-

myths. They are moral tales or parables. They are written by men insane with superstition. All these theories and more have been put forward both by men inside and outside of the Christian ranks. The number of the theories bears witness, if witness were needed, both to the universal impression that the narrators were telling the truth as they knew it, and to the irreconcilability of that truth with the popular idea of God; or, to be accurate, to the irreconcilability of the theory of miracles, based upon the popular idea of God, with what is known of the reign of law in nature.

The fact that miracles may not be reversals of the law of nature seems to have escaped many who write and talk on the subject. As a matter of fact, a miracle is simply a wonderful thing; by tacit consent modern English writers seem to apply the word to a wonderful thing done by or to a religious teacher. Now, whenever any wonderful thing occurs, investigation and experiment prove that it has come about, not from violation of laws of

nature, but from an unusual combination of known laws with the occasional intervention of an unknown law. Our method of discovering unknown laws of nature depends upon this fact; a very common fact in experimental science. Thus when Galvani, by placing the moist legs of a dead frog in contact with both iron and copper, caused the muscles to twitch, he was dealing with a wonderful thing caused by what was at that time an unknown law of nature. The final result is our present mastery over electricity.

Wonderful things done by, or to, a religious teacher probably have no special exemption from this rule. They should be the result of unusual combinations of known laws with the occasional intervention of an unknown law. Owing to the scarcity of religious teachers of the first class, and consequent lack of facilities for experiment, some of the laws still remain unknown; but many, unknown at the time, are known now. That stock object of derision, the story of Jonah and the whale, will serve to illustrate this fact, and

serve, also, to illustrate the garbled way in which the public repeats such stories. Much comment has been wasted on the story because whales have throats too small to admit a human body; the fact that a sperm whale can swallow an ox, and the further fact that any one who cares to turn to the book and read will see that the record never said it was a whale at all, being both omitted. In Greek, English, and Hebrew, the record says "A great fish." The incident of a great fish swallowing a man alive occurs somewhere nearly every month. For nineteen centuries the problem of how such a man could exist for three days or so without air, and in the stomach of a fish, was regarded as insoluble. It was pointed out that, if alive, he would not be digested, for digestion does not proceed on live flesh, else the digestive fluid of each stomach would destroy the stomach itself; but that he should remain alive and conscious was taken as either untrue, or a proof of the operation of some unknown law. About twenty years ago we began to gain

vague shadows of the law. At the present day any one acquainted with the laws governing catalepsy, especially catalepsy induced by terror, will admit after a moment's reflection that whether Jonah was swallowed by a great fish and lived three days in that fish or not, is a matter for discussion and evidence; but that he COULD have done so under certain unusual but well-known conditions is beyond question.

The miracles recorded in the Christian books, if they be produced by natural laws still unknown, or by unusual combinations of known laws, are not irrational. It is perfectly possible that they happened. Investigation as to whether any particular miracle happened or not is a mere matter of weighing of evidence, and follows the rules of evidence applicable to the investigation of any other phenomenon which cannot easily be repeated on a scale of laboratory experiment.

It will be seen that a miracle is thus no more and no less divine in origin than any other phenomenon produced by unknown

laws of nature, or by unusual combinations of known laws. Any product of a law of nature, whether that law be known or unknown, is in a sense divine, for it is good science to hold that the laws of nature are the modes of action of the Unknowable; but miracles are no more divine than other things. That a man should perform "Miracles" does not prove that he is a divinely-inspired teacher. It only proves that on account of inspiration or for some other reason he knows much more than his associates, and can thus probably teach them something they do not know. If anything more is learned about his mission and character, it must be learned by observing the nature and tendency of all his acts and teachings, and the purpose of his miracles.

Lest this deduction in regard to the value of miracles as evidence should seem to be advanced as new, it is well to ask those in sympathy with the theological method to refer to such authorities on the study of miracles as Archbishop Trench; and also to ponder on

the implications involved in that statement of the miracles of Antichrist found in the Book of Revelation.

It is noteworthy that the so-called "Experiment" outlined here is a question of a study of writings. For those wishing experiments of a more vivid nature, it is recommended that for a given length of time they rigidly follow moral laws (such as that of telling the *exact truth*) *and note the results*; or that they attempt to use coercion in religious matters and observe its effects; or that they engage in practical philanthropy; or that they enter into a course of experiment to determine the source of the strength and charm of those characters who come nearest to successful imitation of Christ. A short course of such study will revolutionize many preconceived ideas in regard to the assumptions of theology, and will point out, better than the most elaborate treatise, why certain theological theories, by those who have investigated them, are regarded not as theories but as established facts.

CHAPTER IX.

THE NEXUS OF RELATION.

NO ONE who studies religion along the lines pointed out in the last chapter, the confusion of heterogeneous elements soon assumes coherence and regularity; but this complete study requires a painstaking care as minute and strenuous as that needed to master the valence theory of atomic combinations. To those who wish to approach the subject along another line, the theory of evolution which teaches that each new variety begins with an individual furnishes a convenient starting point.

To identify the individual through whom energy and vitality can be conveyed to us from the Infinite and Eternal Energy by a process of "Spiritual" or non-material hered-

ity, should not be difficult. It is evident that such an individual could not remain obscure. Either he has not yet appeared, or else he must be well known as one of the great religious leaders of mankind. Those leaders can be counted upon the fingers of one hand; they are Confucius, Gautama Buddha, Zoroaster, Christ, and Mahomet. The hypotheses already outlined are inconsistent with the life-history of any but Christ.

The life-history of Jesus Christ is sufficiently well known to need no review. Some of the documents in which it is recorded have been called in question as to genuineness and authorship, but while the details of individual records may be shaken, the broad outlines remain undisputed. Sufficient is known to assure us that if the source of vitality and energy has yet appeared upon earth, it must have been in the Person of Jesus of Nazareth. As a source of energy He was not only the greatest figure of His time, but, for that matter, of this time also. He provided a process of grafting or pseudo-

heredity, expressly appointing means for becoming "co-heirs" with Him by becoming "of one body with" Him. But it is an undoubted fact that He died. Thus it may be that He was not that source of vitality drawn from the Infinite and Eternal Energy whose existence we infer from evolutionary science.

If, however, it was proven by experiment that He existed after death, and that His vitality had overcome all elements of disorganization and lack of adaptability to environment, it will be seen that that vitality, if imparted to us by "Spiritual" heredity, would convey to those who assimilated it the potentiality of the same power. It will also be seen that the theological dogmas tentatively advanced here in the form of theory and hypothesis, would receive confirmation of the same kind as that which established the laws of planetary motion when the discovery of the planet Uranus removed from them the hypothetical element.

It will be noted that failure to repeat an experiment has no bearing upon the question

as to whether that experiment did or did not succeed as recorded, unless all the essential conditions are reproduced. This principle is so plain, and is so fully enforced in scientific works, that it is unnecessary to enlarge upon it here. One of the conditions of the experiments referred to is that the person experimented on was or was not the nexus or centre of vitality connecting us with the Infinite and Eternal Energy; the success of the experiments implying that he was so, the non-success implying that he was not. Thus the non-success of the experiments when applied to any other individual cannot be expected to prove more than that the essential condition of success is lacking; that the individual experimented on is not the source of vitality and energy for whom we seek. They cannot be called upon to do more and prove that no such source exists: while if used to deny the accuracy of record of a successful experiment it is necessary that it should be shown that they were performed upon an individual who is such a source.

When, for example, it is claimed that experiment has shown a certain point in British North America to be the North Magnetic Pole, the demonstration that the same experiments fail in every other spot on the globe, merely proves that those spots are not the North Magnetic Pole; while if unsuccessful repetitions of the same experiments are used to attack the historic accuracy of the records of the first experiment, it must be shown that they were conducted upon the North Magnetic Pole before any scientific man will listen. In like manner, when it is claimed that Christ rose from the dead and is therefore Divine, the fact that experiment has proven that any or all of the rest of the human race do not rise from the dead, can only prove that the rest of the human race are not divine. If used to impugn the accuracy of the recorded experiments as to Christ's resurrection, it must be shown that they have been conducted upon someone who was Divine and that he did not rise again.

What were the recorded experiments in

regard to Christ, and under what conditions did they occur?

Of course, if the statements recorded in the documents are correct, there is no further need of investigation. The experiments were exhaustive and they prove the case. Anyone who will read the accounts from the standpoint of inquiry as to whether the medical tests of death were conclusive and the tests of vitality of the risen body complete, will agree that, granted the accuracy of the narrative, a death and resurrection did occur. Before the light thrown upon the problem by the theory of evolution was realized, there existed a school of thought holding that the documents could not be true because of the incredibility of the statements involved; but the position is hardly tenable at present on account of our increased knowledge, many biological discoveries having exhausted our faculty of wonder; apart from the fact that incredibility has no bearing for or against the truth of a proposition, as was shown when Montezuma found it incredible that unknown

beings riding unknown beasts and fighting with unheard of weapons should have landed upon his coasts. "Such things do not happen," he said in effect, "while messengers often lie: therefore this thing must be a lie of the messengers." A discussion of the fallacy involved can be found in most books of logic.

We have, then, to examine the records of a series of experiments dealing with the vitality of an organism: there are five independent sets of records, four of which are bitterly attacked in regard to genuineness and accuracy. To base upon them any conclusions involving their genuineness is thus unscientific. The fifth and oldest set of records is partial only, given in the form of allusions. Its genuineness is admitted (the reference is to the undoubted Pauline Epistles), and establishes the fact that the other four were written in good faith; believed, that is, by their writers; but as to details of the experiments it is insufficient. It establishes, however, that the dead and bloodless body of

Jesus of Nazareth, with a spear-wound through the heart, was placed in a definite, localized tomb. Thirty-six hours later it was missing. His followers believed that they had seen it raised from the dead. Now what became of the body?

If raised from the dead, the matter is explained at once. If not raised, what became of it? The apostles and disciples did not steal it, for they could not have done so without their own knowledge, and their subsequent lives and deaths show that, as far as their knowledge went, it had undergone a resurrection and return to vitality. The opponents of Christianity from the critical standpoint have advanced many theories to account for the established and admitted fact that the records were believed by their writers; the hysteria theory of Renan is a case in point; but the theories all fail to account for the disappearance of the body.

It is evidently beyond the province of this work to rehearse here the modern arguments for and against the truth of the resurrection.

No other matter has been discussed so thoroughly. No other historical event of any age is capable of such moral and legal proof. No recorded experiment is capable of such scientific proof, except when the accuracy of the record is assumed. Doubt the accuracy of record of a scientific experiment and that experiment immediately becomes harder to prove than the resurrection; assume the accuracy of the records of the resurrection and no scientific experiment has greater or more conclusive proof. It is plainly beyond the scope of this work to enter into an examination of the date and authorship of the four Gospels—the accuracy of the record. It will be seen, however, that any person arriving by critical or historical investigation at historical certainty in regard to the resurrection, arrives also at certainty that the theological doctrines advanced here under the form of theory and hypothesis are really established facts. It is suggested that criticism of the views of those who hold that they have arrived at such historical certainty, should be

suspended until the critic has examined the record of the experiments which led them to that conclusion.

Two ways have thus been pointed out along which the tenets of theology may be submitted to experiment. These experiments have been exhaustively tried. They may be repeated by anyone wishing to do so. A third line has been suggested which may be summed up in the words, "Let the investigator place his life, as far as possible, in harmony with that of Jesus of Nazareth, and observe the change of feeling and the increase of insight which comes from the new point of view." It is claimed that in direct proportion to the thoroughness with which the lives are made alike, the conclusions of the experimenter will approximate those of Christ; so that, if their conclusions differ, it is possible to work back and find the cause of difference in some lack of Christlikeness in the life of the experimenter.

This third course of experiment was originally advocated in the words, "Whoso doeth

My will, he shall know the doctrine"; and such accuracy as theology may have, comes from the fact that its doctrines were originally formulated by men who had advanced some distance along the lines of this course of experiment. It is simple scientific fairness that those who would oppose their conclusions should first try the experiments on which their conclusions were founded.

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